



## Mason-Oceana Water Safety Coalition

408 Resseguie Street, Suite 100 • Ludington, Michigan 49431

Michigan Senate  
P.O. Box 30036  
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

May 1, 2015

Dear Senator(s),

The Mason-Oceana Water Safety Coalition was organized in 2011, in response to numerous water related fatalities in Lake Michigan along the shores of Mason and Oceana Counties. Since the Coalition's inception, all of the member agencies have collaborated on efforts to make our shorelines safer for our citizens and visitors. The Mason-Oceana Water Safety Coalition membership includes a myriad of agencies from the two counties including: local law enforcement, fire departments, emergency medical services, municipal government, departments of public works, conservation districts, United States Coast Guard, United States Forest Service, State Parks, and the National Weather Service.

As a Coalition, we are supportive of efforts to increase the safety of our area beaches. Proposed Senate Bill 265 is a great step towards increasing the safety of public beaches. We believe the proposed changes will encourage more communities to place safety and emergency equipment on designated beaches, which will facilitate a safer environment to enjoy Michigan's natural beauty. Providing a specific governmental immunity within in the law removes a barrier to providing a potentially life-saving device to citizens and visitors on our beaches.

Throughout Michigan, lakeshore communities are working together to improve beach safety. Several Federal and private partners have conducted vital surveys and studies to better understand the science and risk factors that cause fatalities along Lake Michigan beaches. The collaboration of our Water Safety Coalition with similar groups in Michigan has made great strides in understanding dangerous nearshore currents, and this understanding has already led to several preventative actions and strategies to be implemented locally. Our emergency responders are better equipped with knowledge and equipment, and can execute a much quicker and safer rescue once on scene. However, the lack of safety equipment immediately available on public beaches causes many bystanders to helplessly watch and wait for help to arrive.

We appreciate your support of this bill, and future efforts to increase the safety of Michigan's beaches. As lakeshore communities, we see the safety benefits throw ring buoys, life-jacket loaner stations, and similar safety programs provide to our communities. Thank you for support of Senate Bill 265 to support these types of programs. It will make our communities and citizens safer.

Sincerely,

*The Mason-Oceana Water Safety Coalition*

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